

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method comprising:
 - 2 receiving from a first person a request to converse with a second person using any
 - 3 one of two or more selectable communication modes; and
 - 4 in response to the received request, automatically performing an action determined by
 - 5 a rule created by the second person.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the rule is created by the second person using a user
- 2 interface on a computing device.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising selecting the rule from a set of one or more
- 2 rules based on a condition statement of the rule.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising selecting the rule based on the one of two or
- 2 more communication modes.
- 1 5. The method of claim 1 further comprising selecting the rule based on an identity of the
- 2 first person.
- 1 6. The method of claim 1 further comprising selecting the rule based on a current status of
- 2 the second person.
- 1 7. The method of claim 1 further comprising determining an electronic document associated
- 2 with the first person and retrieving the electronic document if the second person indicates a
- 3 desire to view the document.
- 1 8. The method of claim 7 further comprising displaying the electronic document to the
- 2 second person.
- 1 9. The method of claim 7 further comprising retrieving the electronic document from an e-
- 2 mail storage module, wherein the electronic document is an e-mail message.
- 1 10. The method of claim 7 further comprising retrieving a calendar of the second person from
- 2 a calendar storage module, wherein the electronic document is the calendar.

1 11. The method of claim 1 wherein automatically performing the action further comprises
2 enabling the first person to leave a message if the current status of the second person is that
3 the second person is unavailable to converse.

1 12. The method of claim 1 wherein automatically performing the action further comprises
2 forwarding the request to converse to a third person if a current status of the second person is
3 that the second person is unavailable to converse and the third person is available to
4 converse.

1 13. The method of claim 1 wherein the one of two or more communication modes comprises
2 a voice conversation communication mode.

1 14. The method of claim 13 wherein the voice conversation communication mode comprises
2 Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

1 15. The method of claim 1 wherein the one of two or more communication modes comprises
2 a voice/video conversation communication mode.

1 16. The method of claim 1 wherein the one of two or more communication modes comprises
2 a graphic text-based conversation communications mode.

1 17. The method of claim 16 wherein the graphic text-based conversation communication
2 mode comprises Instant Messaging.

1 18. A system comprising:

2 a computing device comprising:

3 a transceiver configured to receive a request to converse with a user of the
4 computing device; and

5 an integration module configured to interact with at least two of voice
6 conversation software, voice-video conversation software, graphic text-based conversation
7 software, fax software, and electronic mail software, and to automatically perform an action
8 determined by a rule created by the user based on the received request.

1 19. The system of claim 18 wherein the integration module comprises a microphone and a
2 speaker.

1 20. The system of claim 18 wherein the integration module comprises a user interface hook
2 to detect when the user is interacting with the computing device.

1 21. The system of claim 18 wherein the integration module comprises a user interface that
2 enables the user to specify the action.

1 22. The system of claim 18 further comprising a network.

1 23. The system of claim 22 further comprising a second computing device configured to send
2 the request to converse.

1 24. The system of claim 22 further comprising a telephone configured to send the request to
2 converse.

1 25. The system of claim 22 wherein the network comprises a switched local area network.

1 26. The system of claim 25 wherein the transceiver is further configured to receive a request
2 to converse via the switched local area network.

1 27. The system of claim 25 wherein the switched local area network is configured to connect
2 the computing device to an internet.

1 28. The system of claim 25 wherein the switched local area network is configured to connect
2 the computing device to an intranet.

1 29. The system of claim 25 wherein the switched local area network is configured to connect
2 to an internet protocol/public switched telephone network gateway.

1 30. The system of claim 29 wherein the network further comprises a second switched local
2 area network.

1 31. The system of claim 30 wherein the second computing device sends the request to
2 converse via the second switched local area network.

1 32. The system of claim 31 wherein the network further comprises a telephone system and a
2 public switched telephone network configured to enable the telephone to send the request to
3 converse to the computing device.

1 33. An article comprising a machine-readable medium that stores executable instruction
2 signals that cause a machine to:
3 receive, from a first person, a request to converse with a second person using any one
4 of two or more selectable communication modes; and
5 in response to the request, automatically perform an action determined by a rule
6 created by the first user.

1 34. A method comprising:
2 providing to a first person a listing of a set of persons, the listing comprising a name,
3 presence information, and two or more communication modes available to communicate with
4 each person;
5 enabling the first person to select a second person from the set of persons; and
6 enabling the first person to select a communication mode from the communication
7 modes available to communicate with the second person.

1 35. The method of claim 34 further comprising retrieving one or more first letters of a name
2 of the second person, matching the one or more first letters of the name to names of a second
3 set of persons, and presenting the second set of persons to the first person.

1 36. The method of claim 35 further comprising enabling the first person to select the second
2 person from the second set of persons.

1 37. The method of claim 34 further comprising enabling the first person to communicate with
2 the second person using the selected communication mode by interfacing with a computer
3 program.

1 38. The method of claim 34 further comprising enabling the first person to communicate with
2 the second person by voice.

1 39. The method of claim 38 wherein communication by voice uses Voice over Internet
2 Protocol (VoIP).

1 40. The method of claim 34 further comprising enabling the first person to communicate with
2 the second person by voice and video.

1 41. The method of claim 34 further comprising enabling the first person to communicate with
2 the second person by text-based conversation.

1 42. The method of claim 41 wherein the text-based conversation comprises Instant
2 Messaging.

1 43. The method of claim 34 further comprising enabling the first person to communicate with
2 the second person via an e-mail message.

1 44. The method of claim 34 wherein the communication modes comprise at least two of a
2 voice conversation mode, an e-mail mode, a graphic text-based conversation mode, and an
3 voice/video conversation mode.

1 45. The method of claim 34 wherein the presence information comprises an indicator
2 indicating that the second person is (i) logged into a computer, (ii) at work but not logged
3 into the computer, or (iii) out of the office.

1 46. The method of claim 34 wherein the listing further comprises status information
2 comprising an indicator indicating that the second person is currently engaged in
3 conversation with a third person.

1 47. The method of claim 46 wherein the indicator indicates that the second person is
2 currently engaged in conversation using one of a voice conversation mode, a voice/video
3 conversation mode, and a graphic text-based conversation mode.

1 48. The method of claim 34 further comprising querying a database for information about the
2 set of persons.

3 49. A system comprising:

4 a user interface module configured to:

5 generate a listing of a set of persons, the listing comprising a name, presence
6 information, and communication modes available to communicate with each person;
7 enable a user to select a person from the set of persons; and
8 enable the user to select a communication mode from the communication
9 modes available to communicate with the selected person.

1 50. The system of claim 49 wherein the user interface is further configured to interface with a
2 computer program providing at least one of the communication modes.

1 51. The system of claim 49 wherein the user interface is further configured to interface with a
2 computer program providing at least a portion of the presence information.

1 52. The system of claim 49 further comprising a database including information about the set
2 of persons.

1 53 The system of claim 49 wherein the user interface module further comprises a user
2 interface hook to detect when the user is interacting with the computing device.

1 54. An article comprising a machine-readable medium that stores executable instruction
2 signals that cause a machine to:

3 provide to a first person a listing of a set of persons, the listing comprising a name,
4 presence information, and communication modes available to communicate with each
5 person;

6 enable the first person to select a second person from the set of persons; and

7 enable the first person to select a communication mode from the communication
8 modes available to communicate with the second person.

1 55. A communication integration environment comprising:

2 an integration module configured to interact with at least two of voice conversation
3 software, voice-video conversation software, graphic text-based conversation software, fax
4 software, and electronic mail software, and to automatically perform an action determined by
5 a rule created by the user based on the received request; and

6 a user interface module configured to:

7 generate a listing of a set of persons, the listing comprising a name, presence
 8 information, and communication modes available to communicate with each person;
 9 enable a user to select a person from the set of persons; and
 10 enable the user to select a communication mode from the communication
 11 modes available to communicate with the selected person.

1 56. A system comprising:

2 a computer device;
 3 a user interface that is configured to enable a user to interact with a person using one
 4 of at least two of voice conversation, voice-video conversation, graphic text-based
 5 conversation, fax, and electronic mail; wherein the interaction comprises:
 6 creating a rule to cause the computer device to automatically perform an
 7 action based on a request to converse with the user;
 8 viewing an automatically generated listing of a set of persons, the listing
 9 comprising a name, presence information, and communication modes available for the user
 10 to communicate with the person from the set of persons;
 11 selecting the person from the set of persons;
 12 selecting a communication mode from the communication modes available to
 13 communicate with the person;
 14 retrieving information about a person using an identifying characteristic of the
 15 person, and the identifying characteristic being selected by the user from a display; and
 16 communicating with the person.

1 57. A method comprising:

2 enabling a first person to select an identifying characteristic of a second person in a
 3 display provided by a first computer program;
 4 automatically retrieving, using a second computer program, information about the
 5 second person using the identifying characteristic of the second person and a type of the
 6 characteristic; and
 7 enabling the first person to select from the communication modes available to contact
 8 the second person.

1 58. The method of claim 57 wherein retrieving further comprises determining the type of
2 characteristic.

1 59. The method of claim 57 further comprising determining the communication modes
2 available to communicate with the second person based on the identifying characteristic of
3 the second person.

1 60. The method of claim 57 further comprising determining the communication modes
2 available to communicate with the second person based on the type of characteristic.

1 61. The method of claim 57 further comprising enabling the first person to communicate with
2 the second person using the selected communication mode.

1 62. The method of claim 61 wherein enabling the first person to communicate with the
2 second person further comprises interfacing with a third computer program.

1 63. The method of claim 57 further comprising determining a communication mode identifier
2 associated with the second person for at least one of the communication modes available to
3 contact the second person.

1 64. The method of claim 57 wherein the communication modes comprise at least two of a
2 voice conversation mode, an e-mail mode, a graphic text-based conversation mode, and an
3 voice/video conversation mode.

1 65. The method of claim 57 further comprising displaying at least one of a name associated
2 with the second person, presence information associated with the second person, and status
3 information associated with the second person.

1 66. The method of claim 65 wherein the presence information comprises an indicator
2 indicating that the second person is (i) logged into a computer, (ii) at work but not logged
3 into a computer, (iii) out of the office.

1 67. The method of claim 65 wherein the status information comprises an indicator indicating
2 that the second person is currently engaged in conversation with another person.

1 68. The method of claim 67 wherein the indicator indicates that the second person is
2 currently engaged in conversation using one of voice conversation mode, voice/video
3 conversation mode, and graphic text-based conversation mode.

1 69. The method of claim 57 further comprising enabling the first person to communicate with
2 the second person by voice.

1 70. The method of claim 69 wherein communication by voice uses Voice over Internet
2 Protocol (VoIP).

1 71. The method of claim 57 further comprising enabling the first person to communicate with
2 the second person by voice and video.

1 72. The method of claim 57 further comprising enabling the first person to communicate with
2 the second person by text-based conversation.

1 73. The method of claim 72 wherein the text-based conversation uses Instant Messaging.

1 74. The method of claim 57 further comprising enabling the first person to communicate with
2 the second person via an e-mail message.

1 75. The method of claim 57 wherein enabling the first person to select an identifying
2 characteristic of the second person further comprises highlighting the identifying
3 characteristic.

1 76. The method of claim 57 wherein the identifying characteristic comprises a name of the
2 second person.

1 77. The method of claim 57 wherein the identifying characteristic comprises a telephone
2 number of the second person.

1 78. The method of claim 57 further comprising performing optical character recognition on
2 an image of the identifying characteristic.

1 79. The method of claim 57 wherein the identifying characteristic comprises an image of the
2 second person.

1 80. A system comprising:

2 a retrieval module configured to automatically retrieve information about a first
3 person using an identifying characteristic of the first person, and the identifying characteristic
4 being selected by a second person from a display; and

5 a selection module configured to enable the second person to select from
6 communication modes available to communicate with the first person.

1 81. The system of claim 80 further comprising a network.

1 82. The system of claim 80 wherein the selection module is further configured to interface
2 with a computer program to provide the second person with one of the communication modes
3 available to communicate with the first person.

1 83. The system of claim 80 further comprising a display module to display at least one of a
2 name associated with the first person, presence information associated with the first person,
3 and status information associated with the first person.

1 84. The system of claim 83 wherein the presence information comprises an indicator
2 indicating that the first person is (i) logged into a computer, (ii) at work but not logged into a
3 computer, (iii) out of the office.

1 85. The system of claim 83 wherein the status information comprises an indicator indicating
2 that the first person is currently engaged in conversation with another person.

1 86. The system of claim 85 wherein the indicator indicates that the first person is currently
2 engaged in conversation using one of voice conversation mode, voice/video conversation
3 mode, and graphic text-based conversation mode.

1 87. The system of claim 80 wherein the selection module comprises a user interface hook to
2 detect when the user is interacting with the computing device.

1 88. An article comprising a machine-readable medium that stores executable instruction
2 signals that cause a machine to:

3 enable, using a first computer program, a first person to select an identifying
4 characteristic of a second person in a display provided by a second computer program;

5 automatically retrieve information about the second person using the identifying
6 characteristic of the second person and a type of the characteristic; and
7 display the name of the second person, presence information, status information, and
8 communication modes available to communicate with the second person.

1 89. A system comprising:

2 a computer device;

3 a user interface that is configured to enable a user to interact with a person using one
4 of at least two of voice conversation, voice-video conversation, graphic text-based
5 conversation, fax, and electronic mail; wherein the interaction comprises:

6 creating a rule to cause the computer device to automatically perform an
7 action based on a request to converse with the user;

8 viewing an automatically generated listing of a set of persons, the listing
9 comprising a name, presence information, and communication modes available for the user
10 to communicate with the person from the set of persons;

11 selecting the person from the set of persons;

12 selecting a communication mode from the communication modes available to
13 communicate with the person;

14 retrieving information about a person using an identifying characteristic of the
15 person, where the identifying characteristic is selected by the user from a display; and

16 communicating with the person.